



**Bruce P. Barkley**

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The Honorable Jocelyn G. Boyd  
Chief Clerk and Executive Director  
Public Service Commission of South Carolina  
101 Executive Center Drive, Suite 100  
Columbia, SC 29210

Re: Actions in Response to COVID-19, Docket No. 2020-106-A

Dear Ms. Boyd:

Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc. ("Piedmont" or "The Company") hereby provides the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the "Commission") with an update on the Company's return to normal operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In comments filed in this docket on May 22, 2020, Piedmont informed the Commission that certain normal business practices, including resuming disconnections and reinstituting late payment and other customer-related fees, would not occur until later in the year. This letter serves as notification that the Company will begin normal billing practices in South Carolina on October 1. No service disconnections for nonpayment will occur before October 21. Piedmont remains committed to working with customers during this difficult time. Piedmont has notified customers of the resumption of normal billing practices, the option of payment arrangements, and where to find financial assistance via bill messages and website updates. A press release providing notice of these matters was also provided to a wide media market.

In March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and Commission Order 2020-228, the Company suspended the disconnection of natural gas service for nonpayment and began waiving late payment fees, reconnection fees and returned check fees for all customers, as well as certain convenience fees. The Commission issued Order No. 2020-374 on May 14, 2020, vacating the suspension of disconnection of service for nonpayment. At the request of Governor McMaster, the Commission required utilities to work with customers prior to disconnection and offer payment plans or refer them to local assistance organizations.

Piedmont has been proactively working with customers who are behind on their bills for several months by contacting them via emails and text messages to offer payment plans to provide more time to pay past due bills and avoid future disconnection of natural gas service. Disconnecting service is always the last resort and we work with customers to prevent that from happening, including deferred payment arrangements and providing referral information to customers who may need and qualify for payment assistance from local agencies.



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Piedmont's return to standard billing and payment practices will result in customers in arrears receiving notices with their monthly bills concerning past-due balances. This may lead to disconnections for nonpayment under Commission-approved credit and notice timelines on or after October 21, 2020, for customers with delinquent balances who have not requested a payment arrangement. Customers requesting payment plans are not required to make down payments. No customer on a payment plan who is current on that arrangement will be disconnected. The Company's customer contact specialists are prepared to support customers through these challenging times and provide manageable solutions so customers can maintain their natural gas service. Customers also have access to self-service options on [piedmontng.com](http://piedmontng.com) where they can choose an extended payment arrangement that meets their needs.

To the extent practical, Piedmont's employees have continued to work remotely throughout the pandemic. However, as a provider of an essential service, the Company has continued delivering natural gas service while following the Center for Disease Control ("CDC") guidelines to protect the health and well-being of customers, communities, and employees. We will monitor the environment and adjust plans to return to work as needed. This process will likely continue into 2021.

Piedmont remains committed to keeping customers informed and to keeping customers, employees, and communities as safe as possible.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bruce P. Barkley

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C: Parties of Record